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Introduction to the Science of Government
1822



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INTRODUCTION

TO THE

SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT,

WRITTEN

FOR THE YOUTH

OF THE

UNITED STATES.

"Ad decus et libertatem nati sumus; hæc teneamus."

CICERO.

1822.

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Introductory Observations.

I HAVE often thought that a short political instruction on the nature of the several kinds of Government, and on the advantages of our own, would be of great usefulness in the hands of the youth of our country. If it be true that the first impressions are the most lasting, it cannot but be important to engrave on the minds of our children the principles on which our social institutions are founded; to direct the first beams of their reason towards those sacred truths which it will be indispensable for them to know, and to inspire them with a sort of filial piety for our government, by early presenting it to them, as the object of their respect and affection.

How far I may have succeeded in securing that desirable effect, in the following pages, I dare not anticipate.

In preparing this little work, I had constantly before my eyes those for whom it is intended. I have thought that in treating of a subject, so little attractive for youthful minds, it was necessary to reduce the lessons to simple and clear notions, concisely expressed. I have endeavoured to make these lessons more striking, by shewing the divine source of the principles which they teach, and the connexion that exists between the order which reigns in the universe, and that which is established among societies of men. I have avoided long explanations as tedious for young persons, and have always stopped where I thought I had strictly said enough. These few pages will not make a politician; but my object will be attained, should they serve to fix in the minds of our youth the great principles on which our institutions are based.

NOTE.—*The mode of discourse by questions and answers, has been adopted as the most apt to enforce attention and to aid memory.*

TO THE YOUTH OF THE U. STATES.

My Young Fellow-Citizens:

Few of you need to be taught to love your country. The early examples which you receive from your parents, and the blessings which you enjoy, though unware of their source, must have inspired you from your tender age, with a warm attachment for the soil of your birth. But it is well that you should, as soon as possible, become acquainted with the principles on which the fabric of this government is founded, under whose protection you live happy, and are raised to the dignity of freemen: for the earlier you imbibe these sacred principles, the

stronger and the more lasting will be your love of liberty and your hatred of arbitrary power.

Convinced, my young countrymen, that for the preservation of our excellent system of government, much depends on your political education; I have attempted to write for your use a few elementary lessons on that subject. That they may serve to increase your affection for and devotion to our republic, and thereby contribute to insure your future happiness, is the fond wish of

YOUR FELLOW-CITIZEN,

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTION
TO
THE SCIENCE
OF
GOVERNMENT.

LESSON I.

OF THE ORDER WHICH REIGNS IN THE UNIVERSE.

Q. Having attained the age when reason begins to expand itself, it is time you should know the place, which you occupy on earth as a man and particularly as a citizen of a republic. I have assisted you in that important study. Are you now sufficiently prepared to answer my questions?

A. I hope I am.

Q. To trace up the source from which emanates the moral and political order established in your country, I have recommended you first to convince

yourself, by the contemplation of the admirable order which prevails in nature, of the existence of a Sovereign Being, creator and conservator of all things. What are the principal objects of that grand spectacle which have struck your attention?

A. The celestial bodies, the regularity of the seasons and days, the invariability of the laws of nature in the creation of beings.

Q. What is the Sun, or rather what does it appear to be to the weak eyes of mortals?

A. An immense globe of fire, stationary in the centre of that part of the universe, where the earth, which we inhabit, is placed.

Q. What are the celestial bodies, which belong to that part of the universe, or in other words to our solar system?

A. The planets, among which is our earth. Those planets move round the sun in a regular manner, accomplishing their revolution in a longer or shorter space of time, according as they are more or less distant from it.

Q. Are there no other celestial bodies which revolve round the Sun,

A. Near some of the principal planets, are

some secondary ones called Satellites, which move round these, while they are accompanying them in their revolution round the Sun. Such is the Moon with respect to the Earth.

Q. What are the Stars, called fixed because they are always seen to occupy the same place, and the innumerable quantity of which seems to cover the celestial vault ?

A. It is believed that the fixed Stars are so many Suns, forming each of them the centre of a solar system.

Q. Is it supposed that the Stars, which we see, are the only ones that exist in the universe ?

A. No ; for with the aid of the telescope, many more can be descried ; and as that instrument continues improving, new Stars are discovered ; so that we must believe others to exist at distances where it never shall reach.

Q. What reflections has that sublime subject created in your mind ?

A. That this universe, of which the eye can hardly see a part, and at whose immensity the mind is confounded, exists by the will of an

Infinite power ; that the admirable order, which prevails in that universe, is maintained by that omnipotence, before whom feeble mortals are, indeed very little, but from whom, however, they may expect protection, since they are his creatures, and exist because it has so pleased him.

LESSON II.

OF THE ORDER ESTABLISHED ON EARTH.

Q. The order, established generally by the hand of the Creator, may be contemplated more particularly on the planet which we inhabit. What are the principal observations which you have made on that subject ?

A. I have observed the order of the seasons, the succession of the days and nights, the distribution of climates, the unchangeable laws of nature in the reproduction of beings, and the gradual progression by which they seem to be connected together.

Q. Explain each of those observations separately.

A. The order of the seasons, which is an

effect of the motion given to the Earth in its revolution round the Sun, is as invariable as the order of the universe. It proceeds from the regular change of position which the Earth presents with respect to the Sun, inclining, progressively, during three months one of its poles, and raising it in the same space of time to the same point, and afterwards inclining and raising the other in the same manner during the other six months.

The succession of the days and nights is the effect of the movement of rotation, which the Earth makes upon its axis in twenty-four hours. The length of the days and nights varies according to the seasons, but with such regularity that the same day in each year is infailibly of the same length.

The distribution of the climates is also generally regular. As you recede from the central line, called the Equator, which is supposed to divide the Earth into two hemispheres, the heat gradually diminishes, and finally extinguishes itself in the frozen climates of the poles.

The unchanging laws of nature in the reproduction of species, offers to our contemplation another proof of the admirable order which prevails in the universe. From the humblest plant to the most majestic tree, from the smallest insect to the bulkiest animal, each species re-produces itself invariably the same. In that complicated organization of the most part of creatures, all is found in the same place from generation to generation.

Finally, in that infinite number of beings of all conformations, animate and inanimate, nothing is ever confounded. Providence has marked to each species the place which it is to occupy, and at the same time has so connected them together that each seems to form one link of the great chain, at the upper end of which is man, whose physical organization belongs to the Earth, while his soul appears to communicate with Heaven.

LESSON III.

OF MAN IN THE ORDER OF THE CREATION.

Q. What place has the Deity assigned to man upon Earth?

A. The first. God has gifted man with faculties, which not only secure to him the pre-eminence over all animated beings, but make him, in some degree, master of all the productions of nature. The principle of those faculties is reason, that emanation from the divinity, which renders man capable of the most vast and most elevated conceptions. While the brute mechanically feeds upon the herbs which the Earth produces for its nourishment, man interrogates all nature, examines, compares, judges all that he sees, dives even into the secrets of Providence, and stops only at the limits which it has deemed proper to fix to human intellect. His thought explores the world, soars through space, perceives immensity, recognizes the existence of an Omnipotent Being, who presides over all things, and returning towards itself, sees its own weakness, and humbles itself before its Creator.

Man bears, even in his physical organization, the marks of his superiority. The ver-

tical position of his body, the situation of his head which permits him to contemplate the Heavens in his natural attitude, the expression of his face, on which are painted the emotions of his soul; the form of his limbs apt to execute the conceptions of his mind, all in him shews the being, to whom God has given the first place on earth, and entrusted the command over all others. God has permitted man to employ for his own use even the elements. Fire, that universal agent of nature, is at the disposal of man, to create or to destroy, according to his will. The earth is fertilized by his flames. Water and air become also the co-operation of his industry, either as instruments of the arts which he invents, or as serving to transport him to the different regions of the globe.

Q. After so many favors, what are the duties of Man towards God?

A. He owes him an unbounded gratitude, a profound respect and a devoted obedience.

Q. How ought Man to shew his respect and obedience towards God?

A. By doing no act which may disturb the order which God has established, and by faithfully fulfilling the duties which are assigned to man upon earth.

LESSON IV.

MAN DESTINED TO LIVE IN SOCIETY.

Q. Is Man capable of exercising alone all the faculties, with which he has been gifted by his Creator?

A. No: notwithstanding the superiority of his intelligence and the perfection of his physical conformation, man insulated from his fellow-creatures would live in a state of perpetual danger and misery.

Q. Why so?

A. In the first place, because God having given him less bodily strength than to many other animal beings, he would not be able to resist them alone; next, because it requires the united exertions of several men to execute most of the works of which human industry is capable; and finally, because it is only in a

state of society that the human mind can improve and perfect itself.

Q. Was it then God's will that man should live in a state of society?

A. Undoubtedly. Men, as we have said, need the assistance of one another to defend themselves, and to execute together what one man alone cannot perform. In the infancy of societies, those works were inconsiderable; but as industry increased, arts were improved, the human mind expanded itself, human knowledge was accumulated, and man arrived at that state of complete civilization, where his most precious faculties are put in action. It is from that height that he perceives the immensity of the universe, and has a glimpse of the Creator of the worlds.

Q. Is there no other proof of God's intention to unite men in societies, than their need of mutual defence and assistance?

A. There is one still more striking: and that is the gift of speech. That wonderful power, which man alone possesses, cannot have been granted to him for any other purpose than to

enable him to live in society. It is by means of that faculty that men communicate their thoughts to one another; and to that communication we owe the improvement of the human mind and the conservation of human knowledge.

LESSON V.

CONDITIONS ON WHICH MEN UNITE IN SOCIETY.

Q. What are the reciprocal obligations, which men contract when they unite in society?

A. Each individual contracts towards the society the engagement of doing no act which may disturb its tranquillity, of assisting in its defence when necessary, and of contributing, according to his means, to the common welfare.

The society contracts towards the individual the obligation of protecting him against the enterprises of those who might attempt to injure him, either by committing some violence against his person, or by taking from him his property.

God, by providing that men should live in society, has, no doubt, intended also that they should live together in peace. Hence that intuitive knowledge which he has given them of those laws without which no society can exist. Every man knows, without having learned it, that he ought not to take the property of another, commit any violence against his fellow creature, or endeavour to injure him. He likewise knows that by becoming a member of a community, he has bound himself not only to do no act which may disturb its peace, but to contribute, in proportion to his means, to its conservation and happiness. It is not, however, enough that each individual of the society should know his duties, he must be made to fulfill, or be punished if he deviates from them; for man is so often disposed to abuse his strength, that the powerful would soon oppress the weak, if the society should not protect him. Hence the need of the public to control the private force; and hence the necessity of entrusting some one with the di-

rection of that public force, because society cannot without difficulty exercise it in a body. It is that direction of the public force, which is called government.

Q. How many sorts of government are there?

A. There are four principal kinds of government: the despotic, the monarchical, the aristocratical and the democratic.

LESSON VI.

OF THE DESPOTIC GOVERNMENT.

Q. What is the government which you call Despotic?

A. It is that which has been left entirely at the disposal of one individual, whose will is the law.

That sort of government, as the most simple, is that which naturally established itself in the infancy of societies. As soon as it was felt that the use of the public force must be entrusted to some one, it was judged more simple and more efficacious to place it in the hands of a single individual. The most capa-

ble and upright necessarily appeared to be the best choice ; and it must be confessed that if it were possible always to get for a chief a virtuous and able man, the despotic government would be the most perfect of all. Unhappily human weakness is such that it very rarely happens that a man possessing absolute authority, does not abuse it. Generally he, who is vested with the power of doing what he pleases, refuses nothing to his passions. To satisfy them he disposes as a master of the property and life of his subjects, cares for nothing but the gratification of his appetites, and considers the nation as a herd of animals created for his exclusive comfort.

Q. How can so monstrous a government maintain itself?

A. The extreme abjection of the subjects of a despot, who have, not even any idea of liberty, the ignorance in which they are carefully kept, and the fear of a power prompt to strike its victims, retain those unhappy peo-

ple in slavery, and gave to that government a stability, which more liberal institutions do not commonly enjoy. That sort of government has been the most generally spread over the earth, and occupies in history the greatest space of time. In Asia, principally, there hardly ever existed any other.

LESSON VII.

OF THE MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT..

Q. What is a Monarchical government?

A. That name is given to the government, where one man ought to command, not according to his caprice, but in conformity to the laws. If it were true that the Monarch had the rule of his conduct prescribed by inviolable laws, prepared by the will of the nation over which he presides, Monarchy would be a government under which men might enjoy real liberty. But in this sort of government the power of the monarch is always so great, that he finds it easy to do what he pleases. There are monarchies, where the laws them-

selves emanate from his authority, or from that of a council, which is entirely at his disposal. In those kingdoms the monarch is in fact a despot. The only difference between him and the despot properly so called, is that the despot can commit openly all sorts of violence, while the monarch is obliged to hide his tyranny under the semblance of justice.

Q. Why cannot the Monarch, who is in fact absolute, shew his despotism without disguise?

A. There exists in monarchies a class of privileged men, called the nobility, possessed of the most considerable part of the wealth of the nation, and almost exclusively of the high offices, civil and military. That class, jealous of preserving its power and riches, is interested in the maintainance of the principles of justice, and stands as a moderator of the sovereign authority. The consequence of this is that the fundamental laws of society are outwardly respected, and that arbitrary power is compelled to resort to by-ways to attain its ends.

Q. Are there not several sorts of Monarchical governments?

A. There is, in point of fact, much difference between monarchical governments. That is the reason which caused some to be called absolute, others moderate, and others limited. But all labour under the same radical defect, the want of equilibrium between the power of him who governs and the rights of those who are governed. The counterpoise of authority lies more in opinion than in efficacious laws; and as it is of the nature of power to tend towards aggrandizement, the government, by name monarchical, degenerates almost always into a despotism in fact.

Nearly all the kingdoms of Europe are governed by monarchs, more or less absolute. England, which had long been an honorable exception to the general rule, is fast approaching towards arbitrary power; and France, which made an effort to shake it off, seems threatened with its return.

LESSON VIII.

OF THE ARISTOCRATICAL GOVERNMENT.

Q. What is the Aristocratical government?

A. It is that which lies in the hands of a small number of men, to the exclusion of the rest of the nation. The authority, which the monarch possesses alone, is here exercised by many. That right of governing is hereditary in the families called noble. They generally chose among themselves a chief, who is entrusted with the executive power for a limited time, or at furthest during his life.

That government has all the inconveniences of the monarchical system, without any of its advantages. The nobles, who are here the sovereigns, stand at a much greater distance from the people; and the inferior classes are still more oppressed. The subjects of a monarch have but one master: the citizens of these pretended republics have as many masters as there are nobles. Upon the whole, in these states as in monarchies, the condition, good or bad, of the people depends on the

character of those who command. The governed have no check to oppose to the abuse of authority.

Q. Are not these governments subject to frequent commotions?

A. That must happen for two reasons: first, because of the jealousy, which cannot fail to prevail among so many masters, whose various ambitions must continually clash against one another; secondly, because of the frequent communication, which necessarily takes place, in the ordinary intercourse of life, between those lords and their subjects; and which, by exhibiting daily to these people the vices and passions of their masters, must make them alive to their own worth, and create in them a desire to bring those privileged beings down to their level.

Q. Are there many countries governed in that manner?

A. There have been but few aristocratical governments, properly so called, and those in

small communities. The republic of Venice was, for a long time, one of the most powerful.

LESSON IX.

OF THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

Q. What is the Democratic government?

A. It is that where the people have reserved to themselves the sovereign authority, and exercise it either in a body, or by agents who are in their direct dependance.

Q. The principle of this government being the foundation of that under which we live, it interests us to know the origin of democracy, and to trace its progress, that we may the better appreciate the perfection to which we have carried that system of government. Explain to me first the origin of Democracy?

A. Democracy appears to have a moment's existence among the savages, at the time when not being yet acquainted with the advantages of civilization, they live by hunting or fishing, and do not assemble together ex-

cept to fight their enemies. In that state of nature, a perfect equality reigns among men, because they are in no need of each other. The industry of each is the same, and each exercises it separately, if he pleases. In the sole case of war, they chose to themselves a chief, whose authority, indifferently obeyed, finishes with the occasion which created it. But it is not in that primitive life that we ought to look for the origin of the institutions established by civilized nations. That democracy, of which we treat, far from tracing its source to a savage life, must have sprung from the ruins of royalty. The first government, in the career of civilization, has necessarily been in the hands of one individual, because less complicated, and consequently of easier management. When, in the course of time, the sovereign authority becomes so oppressive that the people endeavour to shake it off, one of two things must happen : either the prince has the advantage, and then he rivets the chains of his subjects, and becomes a

declared despot ; or the people succeed in overpowering him, and hurried forward by their hatred of tyranny, they throw themselves into democracy.

Democracy then is generally established on the ruins of the monarchical government. It may be considered as the result of a more perfect civilization, which takes place when men, sensible of the abuses of the sovereign power, take the determination not to entrust it to any one, but to exercise it themselves.

LESSON X.

OF THE PRINCIPLE, WHICH IS COMMON TO ALL
DEMOCRACIES,

Q. Are there several sorts of Democratic government ?

A. That government, although based always on the same principle, varies as to its form. It is sometimes administered by the people themselves on a footing of perfect equality : this may be called simple democracy : such was that of Athens. At other times,

although conducted by the whole community, its divers functions are distributed into different classes, some of which are superior to the others : this may be called mixed democracy ; such was that of the Roman republic. Finally the people sometimes, instead of administering the government by themselves, entrust the direction of it to agents appointed by them, who act in their name and owe them an account of their conduct ; that is the representative democracy ; such is that under which we live.

Q. What is the principle common to all Democracies ?

A. The love of liberty. As it is the hatred of tyranny, which creates democratic governments, so the fear of losing the liberty acquired is their aliment and their support. That fear, however, would not of itself suffice for the preservation of liberty, if the people were not, in other respects, fitted by their situation for its enjoyment. Democracy requires purer morals, and a more equal distribution of

wealth than other governments. A vicious people may be restrained by a master, but is totally unfit for self-government. Neither is it where colossal fortunes shine beside indigence, that democracy can exist. Riches breed pride, the enemy of equality; indigence generate humility, which is trampled upon by ambition. A democratic commonwealth ought to resemble a family, in which indeed nature and fortune may have established some difference between individuals, but all the members of which are nevertheless brothers, having equal rights and knowing how to assert them. In such a community the rich must be modest to avoid ridicule; and the poor must often be proud to avoid humiliation.

LESSON XI.

OF THE SIMPLE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

Q. How is the Simple Democratic government administered?

A. All affairs of importance are deliberated upon in popular assemblies, where the whole

nation attends ; from which it follows that this mode of government is impracticable in large states, though it has sometimes been carried on with success in smaller communities, as for example, in Athens, where every thing was done by the people, who made their own laws, chose their own magistrates and generals, and all their public functionaries, voted war or peace; and even administered justice in certain cases.

Q. Is not that mode of administration liable to create confusion ?

A. It may be easily conceived that such a government is exposed to serious inconveniences. The assemblage of a whole nation, however inconsiderable their number, must of necessity produce some disorder. If we represent to ourselves several thousands of men collected on a public square to discuss the affairs of state, the clashing of opinions and passions, the vociferations, the disputes and the confusion which must arise from the impossibility of understanding or even hear-

ing one another, we shall have reason to wonder that such a government should have, in some instances, lasted so long.

Q. By what cause then was it that wise measures and decisive resolutions sometimes sprung out of that confused assemblage?

A. Those were due to the influence of orators. In such governments, he who has the talent to entice the suffrages, is omnipotent and disposes of every thing. Hence do we owe to the orators of such republics the most eloquent harangues, because no where else has eloquence so powerful an incitement.

Q. Will not such influence, exercised directly upon the people, often draw them into errors?

A. Undoubtedly: it has many a time driven them to false measures and dangerous mistakes. It is not in the midst of the tumult of passions, which generally agitate the multitude, that wise deliberations may be had on matters of importance, and that suffrages may be given with reflection and judgment. He who flatters the predominant disposition of

the people, easily succeeds to persuade them, while contrary advices are hardly listened to, however salutary.

LESSON XII.

OF MIXED DEMOCRACY.

Q. Explain to us the organization of the mixed democratic government.

A. That government differs from the preceding in an essential point; for while the simple democracy is founded upon a perfect equality of rights among the citizens, the mixed democracy recognizes the difference of ranks. In these sorts of republics, there is necessarily one or more privileged orders, to which certain functions of government are exclusively entrusted, while the mass of the people exercises other powers; so that the government is democratic in this, that all the members of the republic participate therein, and aristocratic in this, that a part of the nation has the exclusive right of fulfilling certain offices. The most remarkable of those go-

vernments was that of the Roman republic, where the nation was divided into three orders, the patricians, the knights and the plebeians. The patricians were in possession of the highest functions of the state; it was among them that were chosen the principal officers of the republic, and singularly the members of that celebrated senate, whose wisdom, firmness and patriotism so powerfully contributed to elevate Rome to that degree of glory, which is even yet a subject of wonder for the whole world. The order of the knights provided the armies with officers. Finally, the plebeians or the people exercised governing powers in assemblies, where they seemed to partake with the senate the legislative authority, and with the judges the judicial functions.

Q. What was the cause of that confusion of powers?

A. The want of certainty, with which they had been originally distributed, and the jealousy which naturally existed between the people and the privileged orders.

Q. Did not that conflict of authorities disturb the tranquility of the state ?

A. It often brought it very near its ruin, and had it not been for the external wars, in which the love of country rallied all the citizens, their intestine dissensions would have put an early end to that turbulent government.

Q. Are there among the moderns any governments of that kind ?

A. There are several; but all differ more or less from that by a greater certainty in the distribution of powers, which are now better understood and determined.

For example, what is called the English monarchy is a sort of mixed democracy, because the concurrence of all wills is necessary to the motion of government, although certain powers of it be exclusively possessed by a privileged class, and the right of superintending the execution of the laws be hereditary in one family. It is needless to observe that the rights of the people are much exposed to be invaded under a government where the

prince and the great have such influence.—
The progress which arbitrary power has
made in England, furnishes a sad example of
that political truth.

LESSON XIII.

OF THE REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

Q. How is the representative democratic government organized?

A. The particular character of that government is to be administered by agents, to whom the people confide their powers for a limited time, and who are responsible to them for their administration.

That government is particularly suitable to nations, which are too numerous, or spread over too great a surface, to assemble conveniently in a body. It is a modification, and may be considered as the perfection of the simple democratic government.

There the people preserve all their rights; but instead of exercising them tumultuously,

they confide their authority to a small number of select men. They do not cease to be sovereigns ; but like those monarchs, who depend on their ministers for the conduct of affairs, they name to themselves administrators, to whom they entrust the care of their fortune and prosperity. They merely superintend their conduct, reward them with their approbation, if they are honest and vigilant or withdraw their confidence from them, if they swerve from their duty. Always on the watch against usurpation of power, they leave them only for a time the authority which they have deposited in their hands ; and if they find that they have not been faithful and disinterested, they blot their names for ever from the list of public functionaries, and compel their ambition to perish for want of food.

Q. Are there many governments of that sort ?

A. None such exist, except in one country, and *that is the country where we have the happiness to live. For although England was the cradle of the representative

government, that system is there disfigured by a mixture of aristocracy, which has finally engrossed all the authority. The representation of the nation is now nothing more than a vain shadow, and liberty but a name, the sound of which still deceives the people.

LESSON XIV.

OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRATIC
GOVERNMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

Q. To what happy circumstances do we owe the advantage of enjoying the true representative democratic government?

A. The wisdom of our ancestors, well informed of the abuses of the government of all countries and of all ages, built the foundation of it, after having conquered by their courage the right of governing themselves.

Q. Of what power was this country a dependant before the happy event which secured us our liberty?

A. It was a dependant of England, who treated its inhabitants more like subjects than like fellow-citizens.

Q. How began that revolution which delivered them from the yoke of that power?

A. Thirteen provinces entered into a confederation for that grand enterprise, and assembled by their deputies in a general congress, which was placed at the head of the government. On the fourth of July, 1776, an ever memorable day, that band of patriots proclaimed the Independence of the United States in a dignified and energetic declaration, where they denounced to the world the abuses of power, of which the mother country had been guilty towards them, and their determination not to lay down their arms, until they should have freed themselves from her authority.

Q. How did they succeed in obtaining that deliverance?

A. The love of liberty inflamed their hearts with a generous enthusiasm, which made them unconquerable.

Q. Did not that exaltation mislead them?

A. That enthusiasm was not a blind madness, such as manifested itself among other

nations upon like occasions. Those armed citizens, while fighting for liberty, were aware of the danger of abusing it. Educated under a representative system, though circumscribed and imperfect, they were no strangers to the science of government. They ardently wished a blessing, of which they well knew the value; but reason always guided their steps, and prevented them from falling into the excesses, which but too commonly accompany political revolutions.

Q. To what circumstances must the success of their enterprise be principally ascribed?

A. A hero, whose talents and virtues will ever be the admiration of the world, the illustrious Washington, was at the head of their armies. A council of sages, whose prudence and constancy never flinched, presided over their administration. The whole nation with a zeal, which can only be inspired by a cause so sacred, put at their disposal all the resources which it possessed. All fortunes, all hands, all hearts united, and that concord

of every will and every courage produced wonders.

To those noble exertions must be added the assistance which the United States received from a friendly power, which devoted itself generously to their defence. France, from motives which gratitude forbids us to dive into, entered the field with us against England, and decided the termination of that unequal contest between a new born and feeble republic, and a proud and mighty monarchy.

LESSON XV.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEEDING.

Q. What was the result of that memorable Revolution?

A. It founded the Independence of the thirteen Provinces, which had leagued themselves against the mother country, and cemented the union on which their common safety was based. Each province became permanently a particular State, sovereign within its limits, but bound

towards the others to co-operate in the defence and prosperity of all. The general government, which, under the name of Congress of the United States, had presided over the revolution, was recognized and consolidated, and the nation took its rank among the powers of the earth.

Q. Was not that government, which had been created for the purposes of the revolution, and was in some manner temporary, revised and amended afterwards?

A. After some years of peace, when the wounds of the war were healed, and the aura of American prosperity began to dawn, the United States thought of placing the edifice of their government upon a more solid basis. The want of a Constitution, which might forever fix the principles on which rested the common safety and happiness, was felt by all judicious citizens. A Convention of the Deputies of all the States was called to execute that great work; and that fundamental law may be said to have issued out of their hands almost as perfect as human wisdom could make it.

Q. Are the thirteen Provinces, confederated for the purpose of the revolution, still the only States which compose the Union?

A. No : As the immense territory of the United States becomes settled and peopled, new States are formed and incorporated into the Union. It is at this time composed of twenty-four States, or particular sovereignties.

Q. Is it not to be apprehended that, on account of the difference of climates and diversity of interests among the members of that great association, they may one day separate?

A. As far as human prudence can judge, the event is not probable. That admirable system of government, which leaves every State master on its own soil, and guarantees to it the protection of the others, secures to each more tranquility, independence and strength, than it could hope to possess in any other situation. It is reasonable to believe that as long as the Americans will be wise enough to appreciate the advantages which they enjoy, they will never think of breaking the federal bond by which they are united.

LESSON XVI.

OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

Q. Tell me in substance what are the general features of the Constitution of the United States.

A. The objects for which it was designed, are explained in the following short preamble :

" We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America."

To obtain those ends, the Federal government is organized as follows :

The government is divided into three distinct and separate powers, the legislative, the executive and the judiciary.

The legislative power is confided to a Congress, which is composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives. In the Senate each

State is represented by two Senators ; in the House of Representatives, the whole population of the United States is represented in an equal ratio.

The Congress is empowered to make all the laws necessary for the government of the United States in general, and to that effect its principal powers are :

- To lay Taxes,
- To regulate Commerce,
- To coin Money,
- To establish Courts of Justice,
- To declare War,
- To raise and support Armies, and Naval Forces,

To provide for the organization of the Militia, and to dispose of it for suppressing insurrections and repelling invasions.

The Executive power is vested in a President, who is commander in chief of the Army and Navy, nominates to all offices, civil and military, with the advice and consent

of the Senate, and has power to make Treaties with the concurrence of two-thirds of the Senators present.

The judicial power is vested in a Supreme Court, and such other inferior Courts as Congress may from time to time create.

The United States guarantee to every particular State a republican form of government, and the protection of all against invasion and domestic violence.

LESSON XVII.

OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PARTICULAR STATES.

Q. What is generally the Constitution of the individual States, which compose the Union?

A. The individual States, in forming their association, reserved to themselves all the powers, which were not delegated to the general government by the constitution of the United States, or were not contrary to the reciprocal engagements by them contracted.

For the organization of their particular governments, they imposed on themselves no

other law than that of giving to those governments a republican form. That is the only condition stipulated in the constitution of the United States. In every other respect they may modify that form as they please. But by a coincidence, which the similitude of their manners, and of their political habits must naturally have produced, all their governments are very much alike.

Q. What are the general principles which are common to all ?

A. All the States have established and rigorously maintain the separation of the three branches of government, the Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial, as the most efficient means of preventing the incroachments of arbitrary power.

The Legislative authority is in all of them entrusted by the people to Representatives, generally divided into two Houses, which reciprocally moderate one another in the sometimes too hasty exercise of their important functions.

The executive power is vested in a Governor, who is commander in chief of the Militia, proposes to all the offices, and has generally a suspensive veto on the acts of the Legislature.

The judicial power is exercised by a superior tribunal, and inferior Courts, the Judges of which remain in office during good behaviour.

In all the States, those grand principles, on which all free governments are based, have been consecrated and are maintained, to wit: the equality of the citizens in the eye of the law, the liberty of person, the liberty of conscience, and the freedom of the press. To repress all attempts against personal liberty, every Magistrate has the right of causing to be brought before him any individual who complains of being illegally detained, and to set him free immediately if he finds the complaint well founded: This is the famous law of *habeas corpus*, which is justly considered as the sentinel of liberty. The trial by jury, or the right of being judged

by one's peers, that is to say, by individuals taken indiscriminately from among the people to the exclusion of public functionaries, is also universally established in all the States of the Union, and is every where cherished as the shield of the citizen and the terror of arbitrary power.

In other respects the laws and regulations of each State differ more or less from those of the others, according to local necessities or conveniences.

LESSON XVIII.

OF THE QUALITIES NECESSARY TO A LEGISLATOR..

Q. What are the qualities, which are requisite in a Representative of the people ?

A. He to whom his fellow citizens entrust the important functions of Legislator of his country, ought in the first place to be an honest man ; for without that primary qualification, talents are nothing but the instruments of ambition or avarice. But honesty alone would be in a Representative of the people a

more negative virtue, if he were not at the same time a judicious and well informed man. When we reflect upon the vast range, which the thought of the Legislator must explore, to survey the whole legislation, to see the effects which it produces on society, to distinguish by their consequences the laws which are defective, trace up the source of the evil, conceive the remedy, and apply it with wisdom and foresight, we must believe that there is no situation in life which requires more discernment and information than that of a law-giver.

Q. Is it not difficult to find men who are willing to take charge of functions so delicate?

A. On the contrary ; there is generally a great affluence of candidates to fulfill them.

Q. Is the cause of that eagerness the abundance of persons who are capable of worthily discharging those duties?

A. No : though able men are not wanting, it very often proceeds from the ignorance and presumption of the pretenders.

Q. Do not serious inconveniences arise from the want of knowledge and the unskilfulness of the Representatives of the people ?

A. Necessarily so. The ignorant introduce in legislation disorder and confusion, which tend to the dissolution of the political body.

Q. Is there any remedy to that evil ?

A. The evil and the remedy are in the hands of the people. If they should act wisely, they never would confide to any but sufficiently well informed men the care of preparing their laws : for the individual who is not skilled in the science of government, who is ignorant of the principles on which are based the various social institutions, and cannot compare their advantages and their vices, is not only incapable of rendering any service to his country as a Legislator, but may cause it very serious injury by creating or destroying, without judgment and at random, laws of which he knows not the effects nor the connexion with the other parts of legislation.

LESSON XIX.

OF THE ADVANTAGES WHICH ARE ENJOYED UNDER A FREE
GOVERNMENT.

Q. What are the principal advantages, which the people enjoy under a free government?

A. The first of all is the civil equality which it secures to all citizens. In lieu of those proud distinctions, from the height of which a few privileged beings look down with disdain upon the rest of mankind, a free government levels all rights, and recognizes no superiority but that of talents and virtue. Man there appears in all his dignity, equally distant from the abjection of those who are bent under arbitrary power, and from the arrogance of their masters.

From that equality results the free exercise of industry, because where there are no privileges nor favours, every one undertakes what he thinks fit, and proceeds as far as his genius or his means permit him. Hence the astonishing progress which both the fine and the useful arts are daily making in the United States.

The right of speaking and acting, without any other restriction than that of not disturbing the peace of society, is an inestimable blessing, unknown under any but a free government. This is the right, which particularly characterises that kind of government; for if it is restricted in the least, the situation of society is immediately changed. The enjoyment of that right is an inexhaustible source of satisfaction, which is felt even in the most minute of our actions. To say what we think, to go where we please, to do what we deem proper, to follow, according to our tastes, the various paths of this life, without meeting any obstacle from the will of others; such is the happy existence which protecting laws secure to the citizen under a truly free government, and particularly under that of the United States and of each of the States which compose the Union.

Q. What are the advantages which liberty and equality produce for the improvement of society?

A. In a country where all citizens participate in the government, either directly or by

their Representatives, and where all may equally pretend to offices of honor or profit, the necessity of education is strongly felt, and particular care is taken to spread it through all classes of the community. The advantage which results is incalculable. Education, thus disseminated, banishes ignorance and rudeness, those fiends of the social state; gives an impulse to every genius; develops all talents, and animates the whole society. Hence that superiority, which the people of the United States, taken in a body, have over all other nations. Hence also their perfect knowledge of the social advantages which they enjoy; and hence their general tendency towards an ever increasing prosperity.

LESSON XX.

OF THE INCONVENIENCES TO WHICH SOCIETY IS EXPOSED
UNDER A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

Q. Is not the Democratic government, like all other human institutions, liable to some inconveniences?

A. Unavoidably : and it is necessary to know them in order to guard against or to remedy, the evil.

The Democratic government will sometimes exercise on the morals of the people a pernicious influence. Its tendency to make men false and dissembling is much to be dreaded. The character, with which courtiers are reproached in countries governed by a monarch, is liable to spread itself in a republic through the whole society. The cause is the same ; it is the necessity of flattering those from whom we expect or fear something. In a monarchy, where favours emanate from one individual, there are courtiers only round the throne. In a republic, where all the citizens have some share, directly or indirectly, in the government, there are courtiers every where. A fear is entertained of disobliging the least individual, because the resentment of the humblest citizen may be prejudicial. Hence a disposition to keep measures with those whom we internally despise, and to compromise with vice.

Another, and more lamentable evil, to remedy which no endeavors should be spared, is the extreme avidity of wealth which expands itself under the influence of a Democratic government. In a country, where there exists no difference between the citizens, and where they cannot acquire by their actions or services any exterior mark of distinction, which may bear testimony to their virtues or talents, the glitter of riches is every thing. To acquire them all means are employed, honest and licit, if possible ; criminal, if there are none else. Gold must be procured, no matter how ; when obtained, it will cover the vices of the owner with the decorations of luxury, and the vices will no longer be seen.

Another plague, which ravages society under the Democratic government more than under any other, is the spirit of litigation. The right, which every citizen has to assert his claims against any one, and to summon the public functionaries to administer justice to him, naturally invites men to demand every thing

to which they can by any kind of pretension; and as in the state of high civilization which we have attained, the infinite ramifications of human affairs have necessitated innumerable details in legislation, often prepared by unskillful hands, from which inevitably results some confusion and obscurity, the same spirit of rapacity, to which all means are good to procure riches, finds here a powerful incitement. Litigation is a fruitful mine, where it incessantly discovers new veins, and for the working of which every artifice is summoned into operation. Hence does it happen not unfrequently that the noblest of professions is transformed into the vilest of trades, and that men who should be revered as defenders of justice and honesty, are execrated as the abettors of fraud.

LESSON XXI.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING.

Q. Are there no remedies to oppose to those evils?

A. There are no doubt many, which gov-

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ernment could successfully employ, if not to eradicate, at least to lessen those inconveniences. But none can be so efficacious as to educate the youth in virtuous and honorable sentiments ; to teach them early to venerate indigent probity, and to pursue vice with their contempt into the very bosom of opulence ; to inspire them with a love of truth and uprightness, and with a disgust for intrigue and hypocrisy, and to inform them that to attain public esteem, the only desirable kind of popularity, there is but one way, that which honour points out.

They should be told that the principles respected in morals are also the only tenets respectable in politics ; that the honest citizen makes the honest magistrate, and that the vices of the private are an infallible prognostic of the depravity of the public man.

They should be taught to scorn luxury, that attendant of pride, that foe of equality ; and being shewn that true happiness resides in that state of mediocrity, which

the sages of all times and of all countries have celebrated, they should be inspired with horror for that thirst of gold, which destroys in man every honorable feeling, and renders him equally fit to endure or to impose the yoke of ambition.

Finally, while a generous enthusiasm for liberty ought to be kindled in their breasts, by holding to their eyes a contrast of its advantages with the evils inflicted by arbitrary power, they should at the same time be informed that, according to the experience of all ages, a free government has no other solid basis than virtue, and that in a corrupt society freedom must soon perish.

Q. What are the evils which are endured under arbitrary governments.

A. To be humbled by the disdain of privileged men; to say not what one thinks without risk of punishment; to go no where without being watched by a suspicious police; not to dare to exercise one's industry without leave of the authorities; to be taxed at the

pleasure of the rulers, not for the necessities of the state, but for entertaining their luxury and magnificence; to be every moment in danger of losing one's personal liberty, and to have no legal means of recovering it, when lost; to witness every sort of injustice and vexation used against others, and to fear them for oneself; such is the existence of the subject under arbitrary governments.

Q. Is that the fate which awaits us, if our social institutions were overthrown?

A. Undoubtedly. We must consider our constitution as a dike, which restrains the torrent of the abuses of authority. That dike once broke, they would precipitate themselves on society, and reduce us in a moment to the condition of other nations. For in government there is no medium; the day when law ceases to reign alone, the people is at the mercy of arbitrary power.

THE END.



